PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE STANSTED CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, MALTHOUSE ROAD, SEVENOAKS, KENT TN15 7PH

Introduction
Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Kent County Council intends to discontinue Stansted Church of England Primary School (CEPS), Malthouse Road, a voluntary controlled school, on 31 August 2015.

The Local Authority will work closely with schools in the locality to consider the best way to secure appropriate education for children in other local schools. All pupils on roll will be offered a suitable alternative school place as near to their home as possible.

This proposal is not related to any other proposals which have been, or are about to be published. It will not be necessary to bring forward statutory proposals to enlarge any of the schools listed in this document as a consequence of this proposal.

Due regard has been given to the presumption against closure of rural schools as set out under section 15(4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Contact Details
The proposal to discontinue Stansted CEPS is being published by Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ. Contact Name and Address: Jared Nehra, Area Education Officer (West Kent), Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ. Tel: 03000 412209

Implementation
Should the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform decide that the proposal can go ahead Stansted Church of England School (CEPS) would close on 31 August 2015.

Objectives (including reason for closure of Stansted CEPS and how the wider proposal would increase educational standards)
- The objective of this proposal is to discontinue Stansted CEPS, Malthouse Road, Stansted, Kent, TN15 7PH by 31 August 2015.
- To ensure that every child attending Stansted CEPS or who has applied for a place secures a school place, taking account of parental preference and the individual needs of the children whilst operating within KCC policy and procedures, in particular regard to admissions, transport and support for pupils with special educational needs.

Stansted CEPS is a small Primary school in the north of Tonbridge and Malling District with a published admissions number (PAN) of 15 pupils and a total capacity of 105 pupils. At the time of publication of the public consultation on a proposal to close the school (January 2015) there were 35 pupils on roll. There are currently (May 2015) two pupils on roll.

Stansted CEPS was inspected by Ofsted on 3rd July 2013 and placed into Special Measures. When a school fails its Ofsted inspection it is deemed not to be providing a satisfactory education and that leadership, including Governance has not been able to deliver a good level of education to its pupils.
KCC put in place an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in May 2014 to replace the governing body, which was approved by the Secretary of State for Education. This followed a period in which the Governing Body was provided with the opportunity to make the necessary improvements following the unsatisfactory Ofsted inspection.

Since being placed in Special Measures by Ofsted, Stansted CEPS has received a high level of external support from both the Local Authority and the Diocese of Rochester. This includes but is not limited to support from both an Early Years Adviser and Senior Early Years Adviser, support and advice from the Literacy Adviser and a Primary Improvement Adviser providing fortnightly support visits, advice and guidance. The advisers worked alongside the then Interim Headteacher in monitoring improvements in the school’s work.

The Interim Headteacher and staff at Stansted CEPS also had access to a wide range of training and briefings and additional support provided by the Diocese and other local schools. KCC has also provided additional funding towards the costs of employing teaching staff. Every effort has been made to improve this school so that parents would not lose confidence.

Despite significant external support the school had been in Special Measures for over 18 months. Following the fourth HMI Section 8 monitoring visit in December 2014, which found that the school was not making reasonable progress towards the removal of Special Measures, the County Council, the IEB for Stansted CEPS and the Diocese of Rochester agreed to commence a consultation on a proposal to close Stansted CEPS.

School Standards

Stansted CEPS was required to improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good or better through the school; improve leadership and management; and improve pupils’ achievement, particularly in writing. There were some improvements to the phonics outcomes for six year olds in the past year, given that only 22% achieved the standard the previous year. However, following the 2014 National Curriculum assessment tests it was clear that Stansted CEPS pupils were still under-achieving compared to pupils nationally.

Key Stage 1: at the end of Year 2, the number of pupils achieving the expected level of achievement (Level 2B+) was considerably below the national average on all measures. There were no pupils exceeding the expected level of achievement (L3+).

Key Stage 1 L2B+  Key Stage 1 L3+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 (All)</th>
<th>Stansted (%)</th>
<th>National (%)</th>
<th>2014 (All)</th>
<th>Stansted (%)</th>
<th>National (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
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Key Stage 2: at the end of Year 6, the number of pupils achieving the expected level of achievement (Level 4+) was considerably below the national average on all measures. The number of pupils exceeding the expected level of achievement (L5+) was also considerably below the national average.

Key Stage 2 L4+  Key Stage 2 L5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 (All)</th>
<th>Stansted (%)</th>
<th>National (%)</th>
<th>2014 (All)</th>
<th>Stansted (%)</th>
<th>National (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>33</td>
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When visiting schools in special measures, HMI judgements take into account the progress the school has made since they last visited the school. This will include the impact of actions taken by the school to date, the most recent data on attainment and progress and the school’s own monitoring of the quality of teaching.

In making their judgement on Stansted CEPS in December 2014, HMI looked at the school’s capacity for sustained improvement. In this case, HMI felt that the progress made by the school was not sufficient. HMI noted that “there is very little evidence that the current group of children in Reception are making reasonable progress” and that “standards remained below average at the end of Key Stage 2 last year”. HMI also noted the difficulty faced by staff with teaching a wide range of ages and abilities, and how this affected Key Stage 2 and Reception children.

This Notice provides details of alternative school places available in a five mile radius of Stansted CEPS at the time of publication. This data indicates that there are spaces in all year groups at schools rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.

Closure of a school is always the last resort; this is particularly the case with a small Primary school in a village. Nevertheless the County Council has a moral and legal duty to ensure that pupils receive a good standard of education. Stansted CEPS has been in Special Measures for more than 18 months and is not making reasonable progress towards the school providing a satisfactory quality of education. It is a matter of great regret that Stansted CEPS pupils are still under-achieving, which is a concern and cannot be allowed to continue.

**Alternative Options**

The local authority explored the possible federation of Stansted CEPS with other, more successful schools. Based on the professional advice of the Senior Improvement Advisers for North and West Kent and the Diocese of Rochester, three local Primary schools and one secondary school were approached about possible federation with Stansted CEPS. All of the schools approached declined to enter into discussions about federation and expressed concerns over the future viability of Stansted CEPS on the basis of low pupil numbers. The IEB formally approached the Diocese of Rochester about the possibility of converting the school to a sponsored academy as part of a multi-academy trust. This was formally ruled out by the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education.

**Pupil numbers and admissions**

Pupil numbers have been low for some time, and are now so low that the school is too small to be effective. At the time of publication Stansted CEPS has a total of two pupils on roll. The number of children joining Stansted CEPS each year is very small and these low numbers are not expected to increase. Pupil numbers have reduced significantly over recent years as exemplified in the table below.

**Reception Year Preference Data for Stansted CEPS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PAN</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
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The majority of schools’ funding is based on pupil numbers and a decline in numbers results in a corresponding decline in funds available to the school. In the event that the school remains open, the school’s budget would decrease by approximately £70,000. The scale of this reduction for Stansted’s 2015/16 budget would further affect the school’s ability to deliver the necessary improvements and to recruit and retain staff. This increases the concerns over the school’s viability.

Displaced pupils
The local authority recognises that this proposal has caused concern to parents and carers and pupils at Stansted CEPS. In order to reduce the uncertainty KCC approached schools within the locality to identify where there were vacancies in the relevant year groups. The Admissions Code (December 2014) places a duty upon the local authority to collaborate with schools to secure provision for pupils in the area in the event of a potential school closure. At the time of publication there are 464 spaces in alternatives schools across all year groups available within five miles of Stansted CEPS. Therefore KCC does not intend to put forward any proposals to increase the number of school places in the locality as a consequence of this proposal.

### Number of pupils on Roll at Stansted CEPS

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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013

Note: Excludes independent schools
Rural School Designation
Due regard has been given to the presumption against closure of rural schools as set out under section 15(4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 in that KCC has explored:

- Alternatives to closure including the potential for federation with another local school, or conversion to academy status and joining a multi-academy trust, or umbrella trust to increase the school’s viability.
- The scope for an extended school to provide local community services and facilities for family and adult learning, healthcare and community internet access;
- The availability and cost of transport to other schools; and
- The likely effect of closure of the school on the local community.

The Local Community
The following schools are within a three mile radius of Stansted CEPS: Culverstone Green (Community) School, Vigo Village (Community) School, Fawkham CEP (Voluntary Controlled) School, New Ash Green (Community) School, West Kingsdown CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, St. George’s (Voluntary Controlled) School, Trottiscliffe CE (Voluntary Controlled) School (see tables above).

The Parish of Stansted has a village hall which is within close proximity of the school and local church. Community activities involve the school throughout the year.

Stansted School building and the site are owned by the Diocese of Rochester. The playing fields are owned by Stansted Parish Council and currently occupied under licence by KCC. The site is also currently used for community facilities for a weekly Pilates class and ad hoc prayer group. In the event of school closure, the Diocese of Rochester would consider current community usage and the future usage of the school buildings.

KCC Officers considered the potential for an extended school offering additional community based facilities. It was the view of Officers that this would not significantly increase the viability or potential income generation of the school and it was acknowledged that the school is adjacent to the village hall, which provides a range of community facilities.

The views of the local community were expressed clearly through the consultation process, including views of the impact of closure on the village. These views were taken into account as part of the decision to proceed to Public Notice. A summary of findings was presented to the Education and Young People’s Services Cabinet Committee and the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform was provided with copies of all responses provided.

Balance of denominational provision
Stansted CEPS has a religious denomination under Section 18(4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Rochester Diocesan Board of Education is aware of the impact of the proposed closure on the parents and children attending the school and recognises the sense of loss especially to a village community with a strong awareness of its local history. The Diocesan Board of Education does not seek to close any of its Church of England schools within the Diocese. However it does take its responsibilities for the quality of education provision within its schools very seriously. It has always stated that it will act in the best
interests of the children who attend this school and for this reason and with a real sense of sadness, the Diocesan Board of Education has given its agreement for the Local Authority to move forward with publishing a proposal for closure. For parents specifically wishing their children be educated at a Church of England School there are other schools within a three mile radius (see Local Community section).

As indicated in the data of school spaces provided in this Notice, there are currently vacant school places in each year group at the alternative Church of England schools within a three mile radius of Stansted CEPS.

**Maintained Nursery – N/A**

**Sixth Form Provision – N/A**

**Special educational needs (SEN) provision**

There are currently no pupils on roll with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or equivalent statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Should an EHCP or equivalent statement of SEN be issued before the implementation date, then those pupils would have their statements reviewed should the proposal to close Stansted CEPS be approved. Any such pupils would be offered an alternative suitable place.

Any potential adverse impact that children may experience from a move to a new school will be countered through close working with the school and parents/carers around their individual needs; close liaison with receiving schools around individual needs of children and educational performance; consideration of that pupils needs.

**Travel**

An assessment was undertaken of potential transport costs for those pupils that remain at Stansted CEPS, in accordance with Kent County Council’s published policies, with individual cases being considered on their merits. Travel distances have not been included in this Notice as it may be possible to identify an individual pupil as there are less than five pupils on roll. However, KCC believes the impact on the use of motor vehicles will be minimal as local children already choose to travel to other schools in the wider area. Analysis of pupils currently on roll indicates it is likely that no pupils will be eligible to receive transport to school.

**Consultation**

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to this proposal have been complied with including the special requirements in relation to the presumption against closure of rural schools as set out under section 15(4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Parents of Stansted pupils were invited to an information meeting on 15 January to hear our intention to commence a consultation on the proposal to close the school. The parents of any pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or equivalent statement of Special Educational Needs received a specific letter inviting parents to have discussions with their child’s SEN Placement Officer.

The consultation was carried out by KCC from 16 January 2015 to 6 March 2015. A consultation document was produced together with an Equality Impact Assessment which can be obtained from KCC’s website. The consultation document was distributed to statutory stakeholders, including but not limited to the following groups:

- The parents of all pupils attending Stansted CEPS, staff and members of the Interim Executive Board
- The Department for Education
The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013

- The Diocese of Rochester, Canterbury and Southwark
- Elected Members (Kent County Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough and Parish Councils)
- Local MP
- Trade Unions
- Local Children’s Centres and pre-school providers
- Schools in Tonbridge and Malling and Sevenoaks area
- National Association for Small Schools
- Local Libraries in the Tonbridge and Malling area
- KCC Community Engagement Officer

All stakeholders were able to access copies of these documents on the KCC website. An opportunity to send in written responses using the response form, email and online was provided. Documents can be found on KCC consultation website: https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-consultations

A consultation meeting for parents was held on 4 February at Stansted CEPS. A summary of the discussion was reported to the Education and Young People’s Services Cabinet Committee on 15 April 2015. A copy of the report can be found at https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-consultations

Stansted Parish Council called an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on 26 January 2014 where the future of Stansted CEPS was discussed. KCC were in attendance including the Director for Education Planning and Access, the Area Education Officer for West Kent and the Senior Improvement Adviser for West Kent.

Following the closure of the consultation period a total of 85 responses were received from members of the public who have multiple interests or involvement with the school including responses from parents and carers, pupils, former parents, former pupils, current and ex-residents of Stansted and Fairseat, former governors, local borough councillors and anonymous responses. A summary of written comments received were appended to the report which went to the Education and Young People’s Services committee on 15 April 2015. A copy of the report can be obtained from: https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-consultations and https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=832&MId=5821&Ver=4

**Project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long term value for money will be achieved:**

**Financial Implications**

a) **Capital** – (Premises) Stansted CEPS building and site is owned by the Diocese of Rochester. The playing fields are owned by Stansted Parish Council and currently occupied under licence by KCC. In the event of school closure the licence to occupy the playing fields would cease. KCC have been made aware that the Parish Council would not permit access to the site across their land and nor would the adjacent landowner. The estimated cost of reinstating the land is approximately £132,000.

Subject to the decision to discontinue the school, KCC would enter into discussions with the Diocese of Rochester and Stansted Parish Council over the future of the school site and playing fields respectively.
b) **Revenue** - The budget for Stansted CEPS for 2014/15 was based on 59 pupils. In the event that the school remained open, the budget for 2015/16 would be based on 35 pupils. This would result in a reduction to the school’s formula delegated budget of approximately £70,000.

Stansted CEPS is following the standard restructuring and redundancy procedure. In the event of closure staff with over two years’ service will be eligible for redundancy pay.

Subject to a decision to discontinue the school, the local authority will work with the IEB and Interim Headteacher to ensure that any residual delegated budget and resources are secured for the benefit of pupils at local schools.

**c) Transport costs** - An analysis has been undertaken of the travel to school distances for those schools which have been offered as an alternative place, including the potential impact of eligibility for transport and likely costs implications to the local authority. At the time of publication no transport cost implications to KCC were evident.

**The procedure for responses: support; objections and comments**

A Public Notice was published in a local newspaper on 1 May 2015. The notice is displayed at the main entrance to the school and published on KCC’s website: [http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/plans_and_consultations/school_consultations.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/plans_and_consultations/school_consultations.aspx)

Within four weeks from the date of publication, any person may send in a response supporting, objecting or commenting on the proposal to Jared Nehra, Area Education Officer (West Kent), Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone Tel: 03000 412209; or email school.consultations@kent.gov.uk. The final date for sending in written representations is 29 May 2015.